



**UALR-Bowen School of Law
1201 McMath Avenue**

Friday, July 21, 2006
Conference Room 321
1:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Attending: Judge Jim Spears [Presiding], Mr. Bill Brown, Judge Waymond Brown, Ms. Jean Carter, Judge Craig Hannah, Mr. Ron Lanoue [Secretary], Mr. Vincent Morris [Staff]

Judge Spears opened the Commission meeting at 1:10 pm. The minutes from the April 21st meeting were moved by Judge Hannah, seconded by Judge Brown and passed unanimously.

Judge Spears reported that the Arkansas Bar Association had passed the Commission's recommended changes as revised regarding Model Rule 6.1 with no negative votes. The Association's lobbyist will also support the legislative needs of the Commission during the upcoming January 2007 General Session.

Town Hall Meetings Summary Report

Mr. Lanoue provided a composite report of testimony from the five town hall meetings held throughout the state. The report was constructed into the major areas of work being conducted by the Commission through its three committees: **Pro Bono**, **Pro Se**, and **Legal Services**. The opening section entitled **Environment** provided the informational comments of the town hall speakers into six [6] categories:

- Poverty
- Immigration
- Veterans
- The Current Status Access to Justice
- Concepts of Access to Justice
- Potential Resources for Improving Access to Justice

The Legal Services section was subdivided into comments that revolved around the following issues:

- Overview of Current Status
- Program Value
- Current Issues from Agencies
- Current Issues from Others
- Looking to the Future

Developing Recommendations from the Report

Judge Spears opened up a discussion about how the Commission might use this Town Hall Summary Report to create its recommendations.

Ms. Carter felt that Dean Goldner should contact Mr. Hollingsworth of the bar association to determine a time for the Commission to meet with the bar's Legislative Committee since these committee meetings begin in August. Ms. Carter also noted that one important tangible result from the Town Hall Meetings has already occurred. For the first time on an LSC funding request, all four Arkansas Members of Congress voted to increase the level of LSC funding. That is already a major accomplishment of the Commission. Judge Brown stated that one of the things he noticed was how few people knew of legal services in the community and that we need to expand our public presence.

Judge Hannah stated that the problem with greater awareness is that legal services is already working at full capacity and have to turn away eligible clients.

Judge Spears said we must reach those in the business community (Chamber of Commerce) and show them the need for legal services. This would create a greater awareness of legal services with a part of the community which might be brought to support legal aid financially.

Judge Hannah stated that he spoke with a lawyer who is now a corporate factory owner, does employee representation, such as divorces, because it helps the business productivity. The relative ease in resolving these cases positively effects worker.

Judge Spears suggested that the report should now go back to the committees for the development of specific recommendations. Judge Spears stated that he hoped to have Commission Recommendations he could services as a part of the Judicial Council Agenda in the October 18-20 meetings.

Mr. Lanoue will facilitate the calling of committee meetings to craft recommendations growing out of the town hall meetings in order to have recommendations ready for the Commission prior to its October meeting now scheduled for the 20th.

IOLTA Grant Application

A request for proposal was received from IOLTA. Mr. Lanoue asked the Commission what they thought should be requested from IOLTA including details addressing how much and for what project?

This is the first year that IOLTA has requested grant applications in a while due to low interest rates stated Ms. Carter.

Judge Hannah would like to see Internet access at courts and partnering with public libraries. Mr. Brown, a member of a regional library foundation board, is putting racks of information in libraries about legal aid programs. Judge Spears suggested pro se seminars in libraries as well.

Mr. Morris spoke to the current relationship of Arkansas Legal Services Partnership with at least forty-eight [48] public libraries across the state. Mr. Morris also spoke to the difficulty in maintaining terminals with public access and a past beta testing that confirmed the expense and high maintenance level of similar projects. A partnership with

organizations like the libraries which have pre-existing access points that they maintain, however, has been highly successful. Mr. Morris explained that brochure stands and materials explaining the resources on the website had been sent to over eighty [80] libraries around the state and that this outreach should be continued and expanded, perhaps with the IOLTA funding.

Judge Brown stated that legal aid should send out materials, a brochure or card, to remind judges that legal aid exists for assistance to their clients. Judge Brown also offered that 30 second PSA's available in libraries might help. He further stated that funds might need to be allocated for travel expenses to do trainings and demonstrations to public access point partners and judges/clerks.

Mr. Brown noted that the Commission would certainly need additional education funding to accomplish any of the above.

Judge Spears suggested Mr. Lanoue develop the grant application based on the Commissioner comments and his understanding of the immediate needs of the Commission's work. Ms. Carter thought the available funding per grant might be between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Website Presentation

Mr. Morris spoke of the current www.arkansaslegalservices.org website which contains one hundred seventy one [171] documents in the Public Section [mostly fact sheets] and seven hundred [700] documents in the Advocates Section.

Then Mr. Morris demonstrated of the Pro Se Divorce Packet. The Pro Se Divorce Packet is an online document assembly program that results in the online creation of personalized legal documents and instructions. The Pro Se Divorce Packet demonstrated included a short animated interview process and an assembled Word document that included instructions and all the forms needed for filing for a simple divorce without children in Arkansas.

Ms. Carter suggested that once this packet was developed the Commission should recommend them for court approval so that everyone in the state can use them.

Judge Brown concurred indicating a Commission Stamp or Watermark should be a part of each of the approved forms.

The commission thanked Mr. Morris for his work and the presentation.

Access to Justice Public Awareness DVD Project Status

Judge Spears noted that the funding for the project was complete thanks to a \$7,000 grant from the Reynolds Foundation.

Mr. Lanoue indicated the client stories had been selected by the Commissioners and would be presented to the DVD producer, Mr. Gary Jones, this afternoon.

Ms. Carter recommended Steve Barnes be tapped as the off screen narrator since the Commission has had no luck reaching President Clinton. Members agreed heartily.

Mr. Lanoue will meet with producer today to develop a contract and schedule of production for the DVD.

Commission Terms

Dean Goldner had asked for a discussion of the terms of commissioners since some members would reach the end of their initial terms by the time of the next Commission meeting in October. Those approaching that fate were Mr. Brown, Judge Spears, Dean Goldner himself, and Ms. Frazier. The Commission also still is in need of a governor's appointment which had been requested last October and a legislative appointee from the House.

Both Mr. Brown and Judge Spears announced the desire to remain on the commission. Mr. Lanoue will work with Dean Goldner to initiate an approach to the appointing authorities reflecting the Commission's wishes.

Judge Spears asked if there is any other business.

There being none the meeting was adjourned at 2:25 pm.

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Action Items

Commissioners

- Participate in committee meetings to craft recommendations growing out of the town hall meetings in order to have recommendations ready for the Commission prior to its October meeting now scheduled for the 20th.

Dean Goldner

- Mr. Lanoue will work with Dean Goldner to initiate an approach to the appointing authorities reflecting the Commission's wishes.

Mr. Lanoue

- Develop IOLTA grant application based on the Commissioner comments and his understanding of the immediate needs of the Commission's work.
- Develop a contract and schedule of production for the DVD to be completed by mid-October.
- Work with Commission members to secure narrator for the DVD.